

Market Orientation: hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil.

by

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Abstract. The concept of a market orientation it is not universally accepted to be beneficial despite strong support for its status as an intangible resource supportive of a competitive advantage. Research on market orientation is largely quantitatively based focussing on justifying the performance link rather than determining what actually is a market orientation. This paper contends that in its current state, market orientation research is trapped in a quantitatively-driven research paradigm, unable to investigate and translate what market orientation is and how it can be applied.

It is suggested an over reliance upon quantitative methods has largely limited research to identifying the relative degree of market orientation for a specific entity within a sample at the expense of expanding our understanding of the construct. A qualitative case study approach potentially offers researchers a means through which to respond to the challenge of Gable's (1995) desired research agenda. Three possible case study approaches are identified; firstly, pattern matching (identify market orientation), secondly, the industrial networks approach (to isolate and explain market orientation), and lastly, action research (to demonstrate the value of future market orientation research).

Introduction

As an extension to one of marketing's most enduring tenets, the marketing concept, the construct of a market orientation is still surrounded by mystery and scepticism despite its purported positive influence on firm performance. Despite strong support from recent strategic management literature regarding its status as an intangible resource supportive of a competitive advantage, it is not universally accepted to be beneficial. Academic research on market orientation is largely quantitatively based focussing on justifying the performance link rather than determining what actually is a market orientation. This paper contends that in its current state, market orientation research is trapped in a quantitatively-driven research paradigm, unable to investigate and translate what market orientation is and how it can be applied. As a consequence, it is not clear from the literature how a single firm would proceed to measure its level of market orientedness. This is disappointing given the 'jewel in the

crown' textbook status awarded to market orientation. Out of sight from current market orientation research exist a myriad of complex processes, exchanges and interactions that are embedded in networks of knowledge. Currently, the received view appears to almost deliberately avoid the richness of such knowledge as if fearful of what might be seen or heard, despite its obvious relevance to market orientation research.

During the last decade, academics have recognised the importance of market orientation theory, but differed in their approaches to research. The contributions of Shapiro (1988), Kohli and Jaworski (1990), Narver and Slater (1990) and Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar (1993) are considered the most influential. They argue that market orientation refers to deliberate actions that generate strategic knowledge of customers, competitors and markets, thus ensuring customer needs are recognised and met. With few exceptions (e.g., Greenly 1995), the relationship between market orientation and performance has been claimed to be positive in all types of markets (e.g., Naidu and Narayana 1991; Pelham and Wilson 1996; Slater and Narver 1994; Wrenn, LaTour and Calder 1994). Market orientation has also been cited as a source of 'positional advantage' (Hult and Ketchen 2001), 'organisational learning' (Slater and Narver 1995) and 'product innovation' (Baker and Sinkula 2002). It is widely accepted that a firm's market orientation can also be a firm's culture (e.g., Deshpandé and Farley 1997; Narver and Slater 1990; Webster 1994). This is due to the development of superior marketing throughout the firm's functional areas via developing skills and knowledge (Narver, Slater and Tietje 1998). Despite a growing academic support and a growing body of empirical evidence, some remain opposed to the notion that market orientation exists (Henderson 1998), while others remain sceptical about construct issues of operationalization and measurement (e.g. Wensley 1995; Wrenn 1997). The definition by Hunt and Morgan (1995) is reflective of both the early contributors (e.g. Deshpandé and Webster 1989; Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990) and market orientation's status as a firm resource. Hunt and Morgan define a firm's market orientation as:

(1) the systematic gathering of information on customers and competitors, both present and potential, (2) the systematic analysis of the information for the purposes of developing market knowledge, and (3) the systematic use of such knowledge to guide

strategy recognition, understanding, creation, selection, implementation, and modification (p. 11).

Throughout the remainder of this paper, it is posited that several aspects of current market orientation research are limited by the mainstream use of quantitative research methods. These issues, both problematic and opportunity laden, are discussed with a view of identifying complementary issues that might advance a qualitative approach to market orientation research. The following discussion canvasses; 1) existing measurement scales; 2) the quasi-acceptance of 'intangible resource' status; 3) construct identification; 4) inadequate appraisal of the 'organisational learning' construct; and 5) the influence of time, age, size and competitor effects. The aim of this discussion is to highlight issues that left unresolved will remain detrimental to future research efforts to establish the importance of the market orientation concept.

Existing measurement of the market orientation construct

The most popular form of market orientation measurement to date has been self-administered questionnaires completed by firm management. The most notable market orientation scales used are the MARKOR (Kohli, Jaworski and Kumar 1993) and MKTOR (Narver and Slater 1990) which are also often adapted. However, there is much discourse as to the development of market orientation theory through the use of both scales and adaptations derived from their foundations (e.g., Caruana 1999; Farrell and Oczkowski 1997; Gable 1995; Gauzente 1999; Wrenn 1997). Gable (1995) using Churchill's (1979) framework for scale construction found the MARKOR scale to have serious reliability and validity flaws. The area of most concern is the absence of consumers and channel members (suppliers and resellers) throughout the scale construction. Similar criticisms have been directed at the MKTOR scale (Caruana 1999; Siguaw and Diamantopoulos 1995) due to the dominance (overlap) of the 'customer orientation' dimension over others (e.g., competitor orientation and profitability). The work of Deshpandé, Farley and Webster (1993) provides an insightful perspective on such methodological concerns.

Deshpandé, Farley and Webster (1993) applied both quantitative and qualitative methods to the firm and key customers to measure the firm's customer orientation, a dominant dimension of all market orientation scales. This approach is consistent with Moriarty and Bateson's (1982) view that more than one key informant is required to develop reliable measures of organizational constructs. Through the use of a relatively small sample (50 firms) and personal interviews, a significant discrepancy was observed between firm-reported and customer-reported perceptions of 'customer orientation'. They suggest that self-administered market orientation questionnaires may not accurately record the firm's customer orientation, and therefore may produce a sub-optimal research method. Disappointingly, the further use of triangulation to obtain customer and supplier evaluations that may identify possible 'reality-perception' market orientation gaps has not been adopted. Inclusion of other respondents may also highlight other methodological concerns, such as the use of 'scenario' based item statements (MARKOR) that potentially distort the temporal parameters associated with the measured firm behaviours (Gauzente 1999).

It is proposed that the accuracy of mainstream market orientation scales is presently difficult to ascertain due to their past construction and application. Gable (1995:374), with reference to the MARKOR scale, pessimistically states it is "a scale published in the discipline's premiere methodological journal and thus likely to be (blindly) employed by future researchers". There clearly appears an opportunity, and a need, to advance the development of market orientation research through qualitative methods that examine the role of customer, supplier, and employees, as well as that of the individual firm. That strategy and marketing researchers now concur that market orientation is indeed an important intangible resource (e.g., Day 1994; Hunt and Morgan 1995; Langerak and Commandeur 1998; Olavrieta and Friedmann 1999) provides both the opportunity and the need to examine past and future research methods. The proposed influence of market orientation on developing a sustainable competitive advantage is now of significant interest to strategy researchers. As such, the new 'intangible resource' status also introduces strategic management based methodological perspectives.

Strategic management methodologies

Research methodologies used within strategic management research have continued to evolve during the development of the discipline. The early contributions of Ansoff (1965) and Andrews (1971) relied upon qualitative research methods to pursue their primary objective of identifying and developing 'best practises' for existing and future business managers. In-depth case studies of single firms or industries were considered the most appropriate methodology to observe, understand and explain the inherent characteristics of firm-held resource capabilities (Hoskisson et al. 1999). However, the imposing influence of economics theory and method brought more deductive, large-scale statistical analysis rather than inductive case studies. The economists' rational-empirical industrial organisation (I/O) based approach resulted in the 'industry' as the primary unit of analysis, rather than the 'individual' firm (Bain 1968). Throughout this period Hoskisson et al., (1999:2) state that "As the field embraced I/O economics, it began to emphasize scientific generalizations based on study of broader sets of firms. Additionally, strategy researchers increasingly employed multivariate statistical tools (e.g., multiple regression and cluster analysis), with large samples primarily collected from secondary sources to test theory".

The popularity of the resource-based view (RBV) of the firm (Barney 1986; Wernerfelt 1984) reintroduced an emphasis on the firm's internal environment, and also the use of more qualitative research methods. Hoskisson et al. (1999:13) note that the RBV of the firm "addresses the fundamental question of why firms are different and how firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage". In doing so, strategic management research reconnected to the pioneering ideas of Penrose (1959) that a firm's unique character is determined by the heterogeneity of its productive resources. However, such distinctive bundles of resources, while potentially valuable, rare, inimitable and intangible in nature, are also more difficult to measure (Godfrey and Hill 1995). Hence, the call for the adoption of case study methodologies rather than (or to partner) the received method of large-scale data collection

approaches. It is argued that such an approach, a fine-grained analysis of firm resources, will provide optimal examination of firm idiosyncrasies.

Market orientation's quasi-acceptance of 'intangible resource' status

The intangible resource 'status' of market orientation reflects its influence on the effective/efficient production of market offerings that are valued by targeted market segments (Hunt and Morgan 1995). That market orientation is potentially a source of competitive advantage is premised on a market orientation being valuable, rare (amongst competitors), inimitable and non-substitutable.

Firstly, as previously noted, market orientation has been claimed to related positively to performance in all types of markets (e.g., Naidu and Narayana 1991; Pelham and Wilson 1996; Slater and Narver 1994; Wrenn, LaTour and Calder 1994). Secondly, the rarity of market orientation is demonstrated through its identification as an important determinate of industry profitability (Narver and Slater 1990). Thirdly, market orientation has several areas of inimitability. A firm's market orientation is developed over time through complex social interactions, resulting in time compression diseconomies (Dierickx and Cool 1989) and causal ambiguity (Reed and Defillippi 1990). As a result, it is difficult to interpret the link between the resources and the competitive advantage. Lastly, market orientation is widely viewed as a firm culture (Narver, Slater and Tietje, 1998:243) through which members "continuously contribute skills and knowledge to creating value for customers". As such, a firm's market orientation (culture) is not substitutable through strategy change, as it is a primary driver of strategy.

Clearly, the market orientation construct has received credibility through its acceptance as a source of competitive advantage within strategy literature. However, qualitative research methods are rarely used to investigate, measure and explain the influence of market orientation. Consequently, the plethora of research articles produced throughout the 1990s with regards to the market orientation/ performance relationship, the validity of current measurement scales, and the determinants of market orientation have relied almost

exclusively on survey data from large samples. That such approaches can analyse the nature and integration of intangible resources that are supportive of a competitive advantage remains questionable (e.g., Grant 1996; Powell and Dent-Micallef 1997; Rouse and Daellenbach 1999).

Observing the unobservable

Rouse and Daellenbach (1999) argue that research focused on intangible resources and performed from outside an organisation is less precise than research performed from within organisations. Using organisation culture as a possible source of sustainable competitive advantage, their methodological perspectives therefore are relevant to market orientation research. Rouse and Daellenbach contend that “sustainable advantages are organizational in origin, tacit, highly inimitable, socially complex, probably synergistic, embedded in process and often driven by culture” (p. 489). This view is consistent with Hunt and Morgan’s (1995) explanation of market orientation as a source of a firm’s comparative advantage in resources. The assertion is that without prior understanding of the elements/ behaviours and organisational processes that comprise a firm’s market orientation, its measurement will be sub-optimal.

The use of fieldwork to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of a firm’s culture and its processes would appear prudent to the discovery of construct properties, properties that may be unidentifiable by the received view, but essential to the construct’s value. Wrenn (1997:40) states that “when we seek to measure the properties of a construct we are seeking to obtain a relationship between the characteristics of the number system employed and the characteristics of the property to be measured”. When there is a fit between the empirical relational system and the numerical relational system, a good measure of a construct is achieved (Anderson, Basilevsky and Hum 1983). However, where the theory related to the construct is ambiguous, as is suggested regarding the dimensions of market orientation (e.g., Gable 1995; Hunt and Morgan 1995), then the arithmetic performed on our survey data is unlikely to be reliable or conclusive. An example of a property omitted from existing

MARKOR and MKTOR market orientation measurements are the behaviours associated with higher-order (generative) learning. Neither the MARKOR or MKTOR scales include item statements capable of investigating the willingness of firms to question long-held assumptions related to their goals, customers, competitors, core competencies and strategies.

Organizational learning, the assumed or missing link?

That higher-order learning is an outcome of market orientation, separate to, or an inclusive process through which firms convert information into the knowledge that guide's strategy development is not resolved by the extant literature. Slater and Narver (1995:67) state that "market orientation is the principle cultural foundation of the learning organization". Slater and Narver (1998) argue that market oriented firms are more likely to be generative learners through the need to use techniques that identify customers' latent needs. Further, Slater (2001:232) predicts that without increased market-sensing capabilities, or a "second generation market orientation", a "traditional market orientation" is unlikely to yield a competitive advantage. The suggestion appears to be that market oriented behaviours (the gathering, disseminating and strategic transformation of intelligence into knowledge) are reliant upon generative learning processes to transform intelligence into valuable knowledge. However, the Narver and Slater (1990) market orientation scale does not include items related to the firm's 'open-mindedness', or the propensity to challenge past assumptions. As such, there appears a leap of faith within the extant literature regarding the actual learning processes engaged in by market oriented firms.

With reference to organizational learning and market orientation, Baker and Sinkula (2002:8) cast market orientation as a separate construct that "reflects the *quantity* of a firm's market information processing activities and the weight that these activities have on the strategic planning process. It does not reflect the *quality* of a firm's market information processing activity". This view is consistent with assertions that the presence of a market orientation alone will not guarantee higher-order learning processes through which optimal outcomes are achieved (Dickson 1996; Jaworski and Kohli 1993). Another important view

central to organizational learning is that of absorptive capacity (Cohen and Levinthal 1990). Cohen and Levinthal observe the importance of prior knowledge to assist the firm recognize the value of new information. They also note the difficulties of successfully acquiring and transforming information into valuable knowledge from novel domains within which little if any prior knowledge is held. Again, the current received view does little to decipher the sources of, and intended use of, the information gathered or the firm's sharing activities. Consequently, existing market orientation scales are unlikely to inform the measurer of the nature of learning processes (or type of market orientation) within the firm, or what levels of prior knowledge are held.

In declaring that a firm's market orientation can be identified as either low or high dependent upon the relative position of its score relative to the sample's median, Narver, Slater and Tietje (1998) assume the use of a measurement tool capable of identifying all the construct's properties. Higher-order learning behaviours would seem essential to an effective market orientation but absent both from investigation and therefore measurement in the MARKOR and MKTOR scales. This leaves open the possibility that researchers may conclude firms located in the upper half of the scores have adequate knowledge creating processes. Such assumptions also ignore other important factors that impact upon the development and value of market-oriented behaviours.

The influence of time on the measurement of market orientation

Within the RBV of the firm and its methodological frameworks, awareness of temporal and firm-specific characteristics are present. The inclusion of time and firm-specific characteristics allows researchers to remove the assumption that the particular parameters of a model "are stable across firms and over time" (Bowen and Wiersema 1999:625). The advancement of market orientation theory would also appear dependent upon the accommodation of firm history as a variable factor. That market orientation is viewed from a cultural perspective (Narver, Slater and Tietje 1998), suggests the need to examine the temporal phenomena within market-oriented processes (Gauzente 2001). Gauzente argues for

three time perspectives; 1) time as length; 2) time as age; and 3) time as an historical period when conducting market orientation research.

Firstly, a firm culture that is representative of market-oriented behaviours is developed over time. The relationship between firm performance and market orientation must account for lagged effects. That a linear relationship exists between the degree of market orientation and the degree of performance is not proven (Dreher 1994). A non-linear performance-market orientation relationship may provide moments in time when cumulative levels of market orientation influence performance more noticeably than slightly lesser degrees of market orientation. Gauzente (2001:5) argues that “traditional quantitative models may not be robust enough to take time into consideration”. Again, the limitations of the received view are noted, with the introduction of qualitative research again suggested as a means of advancing market orientation research.

Secondly, the age of the firm, nature and rate of development or change within, may be established factors, in terms of routines and structures, institutionalised through its history (Boeker 1989). As such, the historical presence of a dominant strategy or the overbearing influence of small firm owner/s on firm culture (Pelham and Wilson 1996) may facilitate or hinder market-oriented behaviours. Gauzente (2001) argues the relationship between firm age and market orientation is difficult to assess. Again the inference is that in the absence of fieldwork, such effects (inflexible structures and routines versus adaptability and renewal qualities) remain conspicuously absent from mainstream market orientation literature.

Lastly, the firm’s history provides potential evidence as to the moment of entry into an industry. The notion is that later entry into a market may require increased levels of market-oriented behaviours to achieve a sustainable position (Gauzente 2001). That is, the events that surround the incorporation of an entity possibly impact the formation and reliance on a market-oriented based culture. The contribution of Gauzente (2001) provides motivation for a new lens through which to conceptualise and examine the market orientation construct.

So far this paper has questioned the appropriateness of existing research methods to measure, examine and explain the contribution of the market orientation construct. The focus

has been on problematic issues rather than alternative solutions to the measurement of market orientation. It is suggested an over reliance upon quantitative methods has largely limited research to identifying the relative degree of market orientation for a specific entity within a sample at the expense of expanding our understanding of the construct. This has been further compounded by the exclusion of other informants (employees, customers and suppliers) through whom survey data can be compared and validated (triangulation).

As such, current market orientation research methods ignore contemporary research methods within the strategic management literature concerning the measurement of intangible firm resources (Rouse and Daellenbach 1999). External research (the received view) is less capable of observing, understanding and explaining the elements/ behaviours and organisational processes that comprise a firm's market orientation, for example the concept of organisational learning. Although posited to be the vital process through which market intelligence is converted to firm knowledge (Slater and Narver 1998), such capabilities are not examined by current market orientation measures. Other factors associated with the concept of time also raise doubts on current research methods. In light of the previous discussion, there appears a need to develop new research methods for the conceptualisation, measurement, and therefore understanding of the market orientation construct.

Questioning yesterday's inspiration to see tomorrow's possibilities

That the most fundamental of marketing theories may be of limited use to marketing practitioners should be of great concern to marketing scholars. The adage, what does not get measured, does not get managed (Boshoff, 1999), provides fuel to the arguments of Henderson (1998) that a market orientation 'prescription' cannot be a credible remedy for increased business performance. As a fundamental tenet of the discipline of marketing, the market orientation construct and related construct, the marketing concept, occupy prominent positioning within marketing texts. Yet despite its 'textbook' and 'cornerstone' status within the discipline of marketing, no one, unified and unambiguous definition of market orientation exists (Dreher 1994). As researchers stay loyal to the current scales (MARKOR or MKTOR)

and their derivatives, many questions remain unanswered. Gable (1995) issued a challenge to researchers of market orientation to identify it, isolate it, explain it, and to demonstrate its value as an area for future research. To date, little progress appears to have been made to rise to this challenge. Consequently, acceptance of its presence, properties and influence while implicitly taken for granted, remain open to continued debate.

An example of such debate is the assumed linear relationship between gathering intelligence (understanding customer needs and external threats/ opportunities), applying marketing skills and satisfying customer needs to underwrite firm performance posited by most marketing texts (Kotler 1997). On the basis of such assumptions, it is the antecedents and consequences of a market orientation that have remained the focus of much research. The recent work of Wrenn (1997) suggests that in reality an absence of customer needs (expressed or latent) may result in technologies, not needs, driving firm change. That there may be non-linear processes supportive of a market orientation challenges the existing conceptualisation of the market orientation construct. Such views reinforce the need to reach a unified definition that enables the organisational processes and behaviours that support a market orientation to be identified, aligned, validated and accepted.

Market orientation: seeing is believing

The qualitative case study approach potentially offers researchers a means through which to respond to the challenge of Gable (1995). The above discussion has raised many issues that current quantitative research methods fail to adequately solve. Researchers desirous of explaining the complex social interactions, organisational processes, time and firm specific factors, inherent to the market orientation construct, must go beyond statistical generalizations to expand and advance existing theory (Hyde 2000). The case study approach enables the researcher to capture a more complete and contextual portrayal of market orientation and broaden the sources of data collection through the process of triangulation (Jick 1979). The time is nigh for all the parties that comprise a firm's market orientation (the

firm, its employees, customers and suppliers) to collectively move this fundamental marketing theory forward.

Gummesson (2001:34-35) states that case study research is “used to arrive at specific or general conclusions about certain phenomena, recognizing the multitude of variables, complex interrelations and ambiguities of social life”. It is through the process of ‘being there’ that the researcher is able to be immersed in an environment rich in data that has time and space dimensions. Through the presentation of case studies, researchers can present research findings in a stimulating manner, gaining increased dissemination and understanding through ‘narrative styles’ of representation (Gummesson 2001).

With reference to Gable’s (1995) desired research agenda, the remainder of this paper concludes by suggesting three case study approaches appropriate to advancing market orientation theory. Firstly, pattern matching (identify market orientation), secondly, the industrial networks approach (to isolate and explain market orientation), and lastly, action research (to demonstrate the value of future market orientation research).

Pattern matching

Pattern matching essentially is an attempt to relate two patterns, one theoretical and one observed to establish construct validity (Trochim 1985). It is essential to establish that no other plausible alternative theories account for the observed patterns. To define market orientation, conceptual patterns (theoretical patterns) must be conceived that are not merely ambiguous representations of the marketing concept (Gable 1995).

At the heart of this paper is a concern regarding the relationship between the properties of market orientation and the process through which the construct validity and conceptualisation of the construct market orientation can be examined. The discussion thus far has suggested several threats to construct validity, threats that can be summarised with reference to Cook and Campbell’s (1979) list of threats. Through exclusion of causal and contingent factors upon which the construct’s operationalization is dependent (internal learning behaviours, time and firm history), the construct’s translation into a measure suffers

an inadequate preoperational explication. That is, presently the literature's definition of market orientation is at best ambiguous.

Consequently, the subsequent received view and its narrow focus is open to criticism of mono-method bias (partial measurement) for not capturing the full breadth of the construct. Also, the literature fails to isolate, and/or distinguish the relationship between organizational learning and market orientation constructs leaving open the possibility of interactions with different treatments. Therefore, predicting the value and influence of a market orientation may be difficult, if not impossible, without separating the non-overlapping properties of the two constructs. Pattern matching therefore provides a means of examining existing market orientation measures and conceptualisation. Interestingly, it would enable the inclusion of the firm, their employees, customers, and suppliers in a process of conceptual mapping (Bigne, Aldas-Manzano, Kuster and Vila 2002) through which opinions from all parties directly related to the conceptualization process are collected. Such unique data would be invaluable in determining appropriate research methods through which market orientation could be measured.

Industrial network approach

The industrial network approach has traditionally preferred qualitative, cased-based methods to capture the interdependence and dynamic aspects of dyadic interactions between network actors (Galaskiewicz 1996). Through the establishment of boundaries within which actors (firms, their employees, customers and suppliers) interact, a 'frame' can be used to observe organizational and individual learning behaviours. Such a research approach provides a clearer window of observation to distinguish between adaptive and generative learning processes, a critical research issue to developing market orientation theory (Slater and Narver 1995).

It is proposed that observable data related to how, when and why firms gather information from which to develop knowledge about customers and their markets remains invisible, and therefore untouched by the traditional received view of market orientation

measurement. Tracing the flows of social information provides a unique means of isolating a firm's market orientation and identifying the importance of the actors upon which a firm's knowledge development is critical. The industrial networks approach enables identification of 'issue-based nets' (Araujo and Brito 1998; Brito 1999) through which an holistic perspective is gained from understanding the complexity of industrial systems driven by the presence of collective interests.

Such an approach would enable researchers to isolate common problems, reliances and resource exchanges across actors, as well as methods of dealing with issues regarding how their actions influence the exchange of resources vis-à-vis their strategies and market positioning. As such, this approach potentially introduces significant triangulation of data, adding much rigor to research findings.

Action research

The last approach posited is action research. Action research provides for intensive interaction with respondents (clients) from which new insights may support the reconstruction of our market realities (Gronhaug and Olson 1999). Gummesson (2001:37) claims that such a method provides "access to reality, far superior to that of any other type of data collection method", and that with reference to the received view, "the survey stands out as deprived of access to data".

Given the supposed rareness of market orientation (Narver and Slater 1990), action research constitutes an opportunity to learn through participating in the process of organizational change (Melrose 2001). That firms should be more rather than less market oriented but are not widely observed to be provides action research with a problem solving opportunity through which a deeper understanding of the situation can be achieved. Action research incorporates a longitudinal perspective through which learning processes can be observed, analysed and reflected upon. As such, this approach provides a means through which existing theory can be criticised (Gronhaug and Olson 1999). Therefore judgements

regarding the future value of market orientation research can be made from a perspective separate to that of the received view.

Conclusion

The three approaches introduced demonstrate the value of qualitative methods to enhance the traditional quantitative received view. Since the original works of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Narver and Slater (1990), the discipline of marketing has failed to materialise the benefits of market orientation any more than the previous decades of promoting the marketing concept. This paper does not argue that market orientation should be measured through case study methods, but rather that case study research is necessary to enhance the researcher's understanding of the construct. That Gable's (1995) challenge is still present should represent a priority to researchers in this area to revisit the very foundations that surround the conceptualisation of the construct market orientation.

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